The Homely Virtues Are Still Sure Fire Stuff in Fiction

Unconventionality Gets a Jolt

Dorothy Canfield's The Brimming Cup the Antithesis of Potterism

THE BRIMMING CUP. By Dorothy Canfield. Published by Harcourt, Brace & Co.

DOROTHY CANFIELD writes chiefly for mothers, for the good, old-fashioned story book mothers who have more interest in whether or not little Willie washes his ears than they have in who is elected to the state assembly. And she probably has a great many men readers, too, for there still are men who prefer the old-fashioned mother to the new-fangled lady of affairs. But, any way you look at it, Dorothy Canfield has a host of readers, and there must be a reason. There always is.

The Brimming Cup is about as opposite a type to Rose Macaulay's Potterism as a novel could be and still be readable. The only way we can compare the two books at all is to tell how different they are.

In The Brimming Cup it is the man who speaks contemptuously of "Harold-bellwrightism" and cries out against "flat, conventional, rubber stamp comment" who gets all the worst of it. He comes into a quiet, little Vermont village and intrudes with his liberal ideas into a happy family grouping of father, mother and the three blessed children. He raises the Old Ned for a while, but in the end he runs into a snag and dashes off with a wild look of bewilderment.

While he is permitted the freedom of the elocutionary seas he unloads some rather up-to-the-minute, rapid fire philosophy.

"Why in the world shouldn't she love a fine, ardent, living man, better than that knotty, dead branch of a husband?" he asks.

"A beautiful woman and a living, strong, vital man, they belong together. Whom God hath joined . . . Don't try and tell me that your judgment is maimed by the Chinese shoes of outworn idea, such as the binding nature of a medieval ceremony. That doesn't marry anybody, and you know it. If she's really married to her husband, all right. But if she loves another man and knows in her heart that she would live a thousand times more fully, more deeply with him . . . why, she's not married to her husband and nothing can make her. You know that."

Evidently she didn't, for she takes it all with a grain of salt. When he told her that the only sincere possible relation between the young and the old (after the babies are weaned) is one of hostility, she tossed her head as much as to say, "Is that so?"

But gradually he wore her resistance down. She grew tired of always tossing her head about in defiance. The day he told her that children in a marriage were like "driftwood left high on the rocks of a dwindled stream, tokens of a flood-tide of passion now gone by," she went to her husband for help. What did it all mean?

But the husband wasn't any use. It seems that years before, in the excitement of getting engaged up on the peak of the Rocca di Papa, they had promised each other always to be "loyal to what is deepest and most living in yourself." He felt it would be violating the contract to help her in this crisis. So she had to go it alone.

She had to sit and listen to a full hour of passionate elocution from the intruder. She had to choose between this man who offered her the fullness of life, a "rich, warm and harmonious living," and her own husband with only their children and the happy home thrown in. It was a bad moment, but she came through with flying colors.

And at the very end, when little Elly climbs in bed with her mother and asks: "Mother, aren't you and father afraid of anything?" she can reply boldly, "No, Elly, I don't believe we are."

Dorothy Canfield achieves her effects more readily in the interludes than in her main story. The chapter on the country quadrille, "The Gent Around the Lady and the Lady Round the Gent," is fine stuff. Of course, we don't believe they dance the quadrille any more, even in Arlington, Vt., but it makes thrilling reading.

A Mountain Feud

Gunplay in Romance of Kentucky Hills

THE ROOF TREE. By Charles Neville Buck. Published by Doubleday, Page & Co.

THIS romance of the Kentucky hills is enlivened by a considerable amount of gunplay. There is the familiar feud situation, where two groups of mountain families are ready to fly at each other's throats upon the slightest machination. The hero, Kenneth Thornton, tries to preserve the peace, but he is constantly hampered by the plots of Bas Rowlett, a very resourceful villain, who tries to further his own ends by inflaming the old quarrels. In the end, of course, virtue is properly rewarded, and Bas Rowlett is compelled to flee for his life to escape lynching.

The love element in the story centers about a gigantic old tree, which has towered above one of the mountain homes ever since the days of the Revolutionary settlers. It is beneath this tree that Kenneth Thornton first woos his wife, and it is in the same place that they celebrate their happiness after Bas Rowlett has been banished and peace has been restored to the hills.

Mr. Buck shows intimate knowledge of the localities which he describes, and his mastery of the mountaineers' dialect is excellent. Above all, he possesses the imagination and skill to tell a good adventure story thrillingly and convincingly.

Saved From Death

THE TRUSTY SERVANT. By G. V. McFadden. Published by John Lane Company.

THE grim spirit of Miss McFadden's novel is relieved by its happy ending. An innocent man is condemned to be hanged on account of the loss of a reprieve. By a miraculous turn of events he survives the execution of the sentence and comes out of the ordeal a sobered and stronger man. The author displays her familiar mastery in depicting the scenery of Dorset, a part of England which, as usual, furnishes the background for her story.

For Very Little Folks

BABY BUFFALO AND THE JOLLY JACKRABBIT. By C. E. Kilbourne. Published by The Pen Publishing Company.

A STORY for small persons who like to hear about animals is that of Baby Buffalo and the Jolly Jackrabbit, by C. E. Kilbourne. The buffalo is not very well known in these days because men and their families have crowded him off his native plains. This book teaches some about buffalo, and at the same time tells a nice little story. The pictures by Hattie Longstreet Price are also instructive and entertaining.

Theodore Roosevelt

LIEUTENANT COLONEL THEODORE ROOSEVELT, who is following so closely in the footsteps of his famous father

Following the Roosevelt Tradition

Theodore the Elder Advised His Son About Navy Management

"PETER DUNNE stopped me on the street to-day," wrote Colonel Roosevelt in America to Lieutenant Colonel Roosevelt in France, "and said 'The first thing you know, those boys of yours will be putting the name of Roosevelt on the map.'"

Generally speaking, Mr. Dooley's prediction seems to be by way of fulfillment. For the second Theodore Roosevelt is treading ahead pretty rapidly in the footsteps of his great father, and, curiously, those footsteps, politically speaking, thus far coincide almost exactly with his parent's. For now "Young Teddy," as the American Legionnaires called him when he worked so strenuously in the making of the Legion two years ago, has become Assistant Secretary of the Navy. First, colonel in France, while his father was a colonel in Cuba; then a member of the Legislature, from his home district in Long Island instead of from New York City. And beyond all this, which perhaps the public does not realize so fully, the younger Roosevelt is, like his father, an author.

His first book is called Average Americans, and chiefly concerns his experiences in the war and his reactions from the war. There are also a number of extremely illuminating letters from the ex-President to his son.

Now that he is to become a member of the "regular establishment" on the naval side, there is perhaps special interest in what the ex-President wrote his son in a letter of September 17, 1917:

"The regular officers are fine fellows, but for any serious work we should eliminate two-thirds of the older men and a quarter of the younger men, and use the remainder as a nucleus for, say, three times their number of civilian officers. Except with a comparatively small number, too long a stay in our army—with its peculiar limitations—produces a rigidity of mind that refuses to face the actual conditions of modern warfare. But the wonder is that our army and navy have been able to survive in any shape after five years of Baker and Daniels."

And now young Roosevelt takes his place in the Navy Department at the post next to the one which Daniel has just vacated! Those of us who are concerned with the future policy of the Navy Department will find much indicative of the policy of the new Assistant Secretary in his book. Quite evidently Secretary Denby's assistant is a dyed-in-the-wool disciple of preparedness, and that not only from inheritance, but especially as a result of his personal overseas experiences.

"The first and most evident lesson taught us was the effect of being ill prepared," writes Lieutenant Colonel Roosevelt. "We sow the wind and we reap the whirlwind. As a result, hundreds of millions have been spent to no purpose and blood has been shed unnecessarily. Those who were in this country saw daily the evidences of inefficiency and the coincident waste of public money. Those who went to Europe saw blood shed unnecessarily through lack of supplies, inefficient organization and untrained leadership."

So the Roosevelt tradition rolls on. Another Roosevelt is at Washington, already with some active years of public service behind him and possibilities before him measurable only by his own ability to grasp them. "It is the business of each Roosevelt to play the part of a good American and try to make things as much better as possible." That is from a letter from the older Colonel to the younger Colonel written in June, 1918.

When Fame Is Wed to Fame

Is One Family Big Enough to Hold Two Careers?

THE FOURTH DIMENSION. By Horace Annesley Vachell. Published by George H. Doran Company, New York.

READERS of the novels of Horace Annesley Vachell, who became acquainted with and admired his work in Quinneys and his other early novels, will be genuinely pleased to be assured that in The Fourth Dimension he has written a book fully up to the level of his highest grades. This story has a plot that shifts its two central characters from a country home in middle England to London and then to the wild moors of Dartmoor. And the three localities, when spiritually envisaged, appear as the three appropriate settings for the dramatic record of the lives of the playwright Cherrington and his lovely wife, the young actress Jessica Yeo.

Jessica is a find. She is, in the preliminary section of the novel, a young girl in a quiet English country family, at the hour of her appearance in a play at the home of a wealthy neighbor. She makes a hit, for she has an unusual, almost uncanny power to live herself into a part, to feel its requirements and get more out of it than even the dramatist intended. Men who recognize ability when confronted by it are present at this country performance, and they see to it that doors are opened to her for appearance at Manchester and then in London.

Young Cherrington, a dramatist, loves Jessica and weds her. Then, swiftly, develops their knotty situation. Both are ambitious. Each is eager to succeed; one as a maker of plays and the other as an interpreter of parts. When the woman begins to draw ahead of the man as a popular and financial success, he, piqued and faced by a difficult third act that will not spread out in text on paper, runs away to the wastes of Dartmoor to write in solitude. In his absence a splendid leading part is offered his wife by a London manager.

Vachell has created a novel problem in the facts of the temporary estrangement of "Cherry" and Jessica. We have revealed so much of this truly human novel that we will not divulge the dramatic finale, worked out in wind and tempest and love in a cottage on the Dartmoor fields. The stage has three dimensions, but life, supreme dictator of issues above and beyond the footlights, offers an escape from artifice to reality. This is Vachell's contention, the theme of this his latest story.

DOROTHY CANFIELD, in The Brimming Cup, demonstrates that there are still those who hold to the sanctity of the marriage vow

A New and Dramatic Detective

Dr, Reginald Fortune Is No Mean Rival of Sherlock Holmes

CALL MR. FORTUNE. By H. C. Bailey. Published by E. P. Dutton & Co.

ENTER another detective, belonging right out in the front row of a somewhat crowded stage—Dr. Reginald Fortune, familiarly known as "Reggie," of course. A most engaging and whimsical young man is Dr. Reggie, and efficiency itself when it comes to running down crime. What is more, he starts no end of interesting conversations while he is at his work, which means that the reader who follows his adventures in mystery is not going to be bored with a lot of long, descriptive paragraphs.

Here is the way Reggie figures in the large and growing portrait gallery of distinguished detectives of fiction:

"He was of a round and cheerful countenance and a perpetual appetite. This gave him a solidity of aspect, emphasized by his extreme neatness. Neither his hair, nor anything else of his, was ever ruffled. He was more at ease with the world than a man has a right to be at thirty-five. At Oxford Reggie always had plenty of time and spent it here and there and everywhere, on musical comedy, prehistoric man, golf and the newer chemistry, bargees and psychical research."

There are six adventures in which this magnetic young detective figures, beginning with "The Archduke's Tea" and ending with "The Business Minister," the last being almost a novelette in point of length. The young doctor, who is as high in the favor of Scotland Yard as Sherlock Holmes ever was, and deservedly so, digs into each mystery without appearing to dig. He coins slang, jokes with his worried friends, "spoofs" the solemn officers of the law, and at the end plays the trump card and then retires to his muffins and tea. Compared with the ordinary hard-working, uninspired and mechanical detective of the general run of fiction, Reggie Fortune is indeed a delight. Behind all the author's gift for byplay and light conversation there is a strong sense of the dramatic. One is never quite allowed to forget that tragedy is the main business in hand. The opening stories, "The Archduke's Tea" and "The Sleeping Companion," might be skeletonized as models of basic form in detective literature for the advanced class in that art in any college course in short-story writing. Whether the average pupil could come within gunshot of filling in the skeleton as lightly yet as absorbingly as the author has done in these stories is quite another matter. "The Hottentot Venus" is the oddest story in the lot. In it Reggie is enabled to solve a mystery, all because of having dipped into paleontology, among other absurd things, at college. In fact, no matter what sort of a case he is on, this young physician-detective earns his muffins and tea.

French Culture

Its Development Traced Through the Ages

FRENCH CIVILIZATION. By Albert Léon Guérard. Published by Houghton Mifflin Company.

LUCIDITY and balance are traditional virtues of French scholarship, and M. Guérard displays both these qualities with their natural accompaniment: a brilliant and charming style. A history of French civilization from its earliest origins to the end of the Middle Ages is a rather formidable task. Yet, by a rigid elimination of non-essential details and a scrupulous concentration upon the most important features of the ages which he describes, the author gives us a very readable and consecutive narrative of the development of French culture from the days of the prehistoric tribes to the dawn of the Renaissance.

M. Guérard is distinctly eclectic in his philosophy of history. He does not believe that past events can be exclusively interpreted in terms of race or climate; he rejects the Marxian economic interpretation of history along with Buckle's theory that all progress is due to the victory of the critical mind over superstition.

He feels the inherent romantic charm of the Middle Ages without indulging in an absurd idealization of this period after the fashion of the more uncritical guild Socialists. He shows that life in medieval France was dominated by four outstanding forms of organization: the Church, the royal power, the feudal system and the autonomous communes.

M. Guérard points out that Greece and Rome are intellectually much closer to us than medieval Europe. It is difficult for the modern mind to understand the psychology of a period which possessed neither clearly defined national spirit nor the scientific attitude of mind, nor an organized industrial and financial system. Mediæval culture differs from ancient and modern chiefly in its childishness and immaturity. Despite their obvious defects the Middle Ages possessed several striking advantages. Among these advantages M. Guérard enumerates their vague conception of international unity, expressed in the Church; their freedom from some of the more objectionable features of modern Chauvinism and industrialism, and certain humanized aspects of their religious life.

Venizelos

Sympathetic Biography of Greek Statesman

VENIZELOS. By Herbert Adams Gibbons. Published by Houghton Mifflin Company.

THE decisive defeat of Eleutherios Venizelos in the recent Greek election cannot destroy his reputation as the most brilliant and versatile Balkan statesman of modern times. He has pursued the ideal of Pan-Hellenism, of reuniting the scattered fragments of the Greek race under a single sovereignty, with remarkable skill and tenacity in the face of extraordinary obstacles.

Born in Crete at a time when the island was under Turkish rule, Venizelos as a young man threw himself heartily into the movement for liberation and union with Greece. The independence of Crete was opposed not only by the Ottoman Empire, but also by the European powers, who were all distrustful of each other and unwilling to disturb the status quo in the Levant. However, by a judicious mixture of daring and caution, by knowing when to strike and when not to strike, Venizelos finally played a leading part in the annexation of his native land to Greece.

In the mean time he had become a prominent figure in political life at Athens. Mr. Gibbons justly calls him the father of the Balkan Alliance, which really broke the power of the Turk in Europe. Side by side with his dreams of a greater Greece, Venizelos always cherished the aspiration of a durable federation of Balkan nations which should make for peace in that troubled region. The rupture of the original alliance, due to Bulgaria's treacherous and greedy attack, was a severe blow to him.

From the beginning of the war Venizelos was a consistent advocate of Greek intervention on the side of the Allies. He clung to this viewpoint, despite the opposition of the King and the Greek General Staff, whose policy of neutrality, in the author's opinion, was colored with pro-Germanism. By setting up an insurgent government at Salonica Venizelos strengthened the Allies in their resolution to depose Constantine and helped to bring Greece into the war. At the peace conference Venizelos used all his influence to gain a hearing for Greek claims, despite the hostile or indifferent attitude of the great powers. By securing permission to land troops at Smyrna he laid the foundation for the reunion of the Asiatic Greeks with their motherland.

In the Clutch of Orthodoxy

Elsie Singmaster Sketches a Human Drama Against a Background of Ascetic Religion

ELLEN LEVIS. By Elsie Singmaster. Published by Houghton Mifflin Company.

ELSIE SINGMASTER employs a familiar background with excellent effect in her latest novel.

We are shown a community of Seventh Day Baptists, a peculiar sect of Pennsylvania German farmers who believe in footwashing and trine immersion and regard all contact with the outside world as dangerous, if not positively sinful. The generally acknowledged head of the community, Grandfather Milhausen, has experienced the sorrow of seeing his daughter marry an alien infidel, Dr. Edward Levis.

The daughter has died, and Grandfather engages in a struggle with Dr. Levis for the souls of the two children. The doctor wishes to have his children grow up free from prejudices and religious bigotry and sends Matthew away to a medical school. The consternation of the Seventh-Day Baptists at this development is depicted by the author with sly humor:

"Grandfather thought hourly of Matthew. Each day he became more painfully aware that Matthew was young and that the temptations were many. He saw him at the end of the week surrounded by all the enticements of a lurid Babylon. Members of the church, astonished by the course pursued by Dr. Levis and permitted—at least they thought it was permitted—by Grandfather, poured into his ears descriptions of orgies indulged in by college students, in which wine, women and song furnished a gay entertainment. Indeed, according to the stories heard by Brother König, wine, women and song were as necessary to college students as food and sleep. Churchgoing was unknown without compulsion, and then all were required to attend a single irreligious, inconsistent service, where on one Sunday Jews preached to Gentiles and the next Gentiles to Jews. Brother König, so keen when the trade of a horse was in question, had heard that on certain Sundays even Catholics set up their altars and tried to proselyte. Matthew, every one believed, had spiritual strength unusual in a young man, but he was, in the local idiom, not that strong.

"It was reported also that all evil practices reached their height in the Medical School, where Matthew, after an incredibly long stay elsewhere, would eventually spend four years. Brother König could invent little beyond that which he had already imparted, but he stated plainly that there were other things of which he would not tell."

In spite of all these forebodings Matthew does not succumb to the secular allurements of the Medical School. He runs away, returns to Grandfather, settles down as a farmer and a devout Seventh Day Baptist, and only repents of his decision when it is too late. It is his sister Ellen who rebels against the narrowness and pettiness of the little sectarian community and awakens to the larger world outside.

After trying in various ways to earn her own living, Ellen becomes a maid in the home of Stephen Lanfair, an old college friend of her father's. Stephen has his own tragedy; he has been fatally hampered in his professional career by marrying a rich and stupid woman with a morbid obsession of jealousy, which finally develops into insanity.

When Stephen finds out who Ellen is he sends her to college. His interest in her, which is first benevolent and paternal, soon assumes a warmer character. The author describes the relationship with her usual skill and subtlety and insight. The death of the insane wife provides an escape from what was becoming a difficult situation.

Miss Singmaster displays remarkable facility in characterization, and her style is both direct and compact. She indulges in few digressions; it isn't safe to skip any of her chapters. She has created an unusually ambitious plot, and she handles it very adequately indeed.

Balzac's Women

EVER since the publication of the Comédie Humaine the novels of Balzac have been criticized on the ground that the great French romancer, a bourgeois by birth and training, really knew nothing of the "high society" which he so often depicts. The Holts are bringing out soon a book, Women in the Life of Balzac, which once and for all disposes of this criticism by revealing Balzac's intimate association with various women of the highest social standing. The author, Miss Juanita Floyd, of Goucher College, has devoted years to the study of Balzac's life, and in her careful and remarkably documented book has added so much to our knowledge of the love affairs of this famous novelist that her volume will be practically indispensable to the many readers of his works. The book is full of illustrations, including a miniature of Balzac's wife never before published and reproduced by special permission of J. P. Morgan, in whose collection the original now is.